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conclusions are sometimes open to challenge. He appears not even to entertain the hypothesis that chapter 13 was originally a Jewish apocalypse of the time of Caligula; but does not the name "Gaius Caesar" correspond more perfectly to the number of the beast than that of Nero? The difficult passage 12:1-6 is not adequately solved by the conjecture that "the Messiah in the future would temporarily assume the form of an infant born of a strange astral mother, in order that Satan's enmity might find opportunity of expression." Still more unsatisfying is the treatment of the crucial verse concerning the seven emperors—the verse on which the whole discussion of the date and composition of Revelation so largely hinges. Professor Case disposes of all the perplexities by the simple assumption that John has mistaken the place of Domitian, just as a citizen of the United States may fail to remember the precise order of the presidents. This does not appear probable. A writer at the end of the first century had only a short list of emperors to remember, and had himself lived through most of the reigns. It must have been an uncommonly poor memory that could not get them right. On matters of detail, however, expositors of Revelation will always differ, and Professor Case is entitled to his own opinions, which he never fails to defend with abundant learning and solid argument. His chief concern is always with those larger purposes of the book to which the details are subordinate. He tries to interpret to the modern mind a noble work of the past which looks forbidding and mysterious for no other reason than that its setting and literary character have been so grievously misunderstood. This task he has accomplished in a conspicuously able and effectual manner, and it is to be hoped that his book will find its way to a large circle of readers. Revelation, with its call to an indomitable faith in the face of overwhelming troubles, has a real message for the world of today. This message has been too long obscured by absurd and ignorant interpretations, and we cannot but welcome a book which enables us once more to apprehend it.

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MANICHEAN STUDIES

Two small volumes from the pen of a French scholar, Prosper Alfarc, form a valuable contribution to the history of Manichæism.¹ Although the author professes merely to give a survey of data regarding the Mani-

¹ *Les écritures Manichéennes: I. Vue général. II. Étude analytique.* By Prosper Alfarc. Paris: Nourry, 1918. iii+154 and 240 pages.

chean writings, in reality he has made a comprehensive collection of such materials as are at present available for a study of the life and work of Mani and his disciples. An examination of early Gnostic sects and writings furnishes the point of departure for a summary statement of the tradition regarding the career of Mani and the literary activities of himself and his successors. Then follows a general description of both the content and the literary form of Manichean writings. In sketching the history of this literature, it is found to have been somewhat widely known in ancient times. The circumstances which brought about its ultimate disappearance are noted and a detailed account is given of such testimonies as are at present available regarding its original character and content. While it is recognized that these testimonies, coming as they do from Christian polemicists and from Arabic, Persian, and Chinese sources, are often prejudiced and inaccurate, yet they are believed to contain a considerable amount of reliable data. These secondary sources are supplemented by the comparatively recent finds at Tun-huang and Turfan, which though brief in content add important items to the historian's information.

The second volume contains a more detailed description of the content of the writings used by the Manicheans. First, there were books actually composed by Mani and his disciples. These works are no longer extant, but a fairly accurate notion of their contents is obtainable from Christian and pagan authors who sought either to describe, to refute, or to ridicule the sect. Certain characteristics of Manichaeism are also disclosed by the type of Jewish, Christian, and pagan writings which Mani and his followers appropriated from time to time for their own use. The tradition regarding these matters is examined carefully, and the inclusion of extensive quotations from the ancient authorities makes this second volume of Alfarc's work virtually a source book for the study of Manichaeism.

Many thanks are due the author for the faithful labor which he has expended upon this obscure subject. From the standpoint of critical historical inquiry, it is of interest to note that he does not make Manichaeism primarily a perversion of an original Christianity through the adoption of Gnosticism on the one hand or Persian, Babylonian, or Buddhistic vagaries on the other. Nor does he follow the well-known view of Kessler, who saw in the Manichean movement essentially a revival of Babylonian paganism. On the contrary, the most immediate genetic connections of Manichaeism are found in an original type of interest characteristic of the time and locality which produced

both Mani and the early Gnostics. Starting from this source Mani's movement gradually took on a distinctiveness derived from the personality of its founder and from the syncretistic life of its environment as it came in contact with both Christianity and paganism.

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RECENT INTERPRETATIONS OF NEOPLATONISM

Every valuable addition to the interpretation of Neoplatonism is incidentally an aid to the study of church history. By the third century Christianity had entered very substantially upon the task of making itself a vehicle of culture, and in Neoplatonism it found a vigorous rival as well as an important source of inspiration and guidance in its own endeavor. The debt of successive generations of Christians to their Neoplatonic predecessors is today a widely recognized fact, but to estimate the actual extent and nature of this obligation requires special familiarity with that perplexing and elusive system of philosophy founded by Plotinus. Two recent discussions, one by Thomas Whittaker and the other by William Ralph Inge, are distinct contributions toward a better understanding of this subject.

Whittaker's *Neoplatonists*,¹ which now appears in a second edition, has commonly been cited as a standard work ever since its first publication in 1901. So far as the main body of the book is concerned the new edition is scarcely more than a reprint of the old, but in a supplement of eighty-four pages the author discusses separately the commentaries of Proclus. Whether this formal arrangement is a happy one may be questioned. In an earlier part of the book a chapter is given to "The Athenian School," of which Proclus is of course the most distinguished representative. A recasting of this chapter to include a thorough treatment of both the views and the writings of Proclus would seem to have been the more desirable method of procedure. Then a reader would have been more adequately prepared to appreciate the succeeding discussion on the influence of Neoplatonism and the concluding summary of the final chapter.

A few pages of the Appendix which deal with Gnosticism have been substantially re-written to conform to the views of Reitzenstein

¹ *The Neoplatonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism*. By Thomas Whittaker. Second edition, with a supplement on the commentaries of Proclus. Cambridge: University Press, 1918. xvi+318 pages. 12s.